N° 90. SATURDAY, *October* 21, 1786.

To the AUTHOR of the LOUNGER.

SIR,

THOUGH, from my rank in life, being a tradesman's daughter, left an orphan at six years old, I had little title to know any thing about sensibility or feeling; yet having been very kindly taken into a family, where there were several young ladies who were great readers, I had opportunities of hearing a good deal about these things. By the same young ladies I was made acquainted with your Paper, and it was a favourite employment of mine to read the *Lounger* to them every Saturday morning. In one of the numbers published some time ago, we met with *Mrs. Alice Heartly*'s account of an old lady with whom she lives; and from the experience of our own feelings, could not help pitying the connection with one so destitute of all tender sentiment as my Lady *Bidmore*. I had soon after occasion to congratulate myself on a very different sort of establishment, having been recommended by my young patronesses to a lady, who used frequently to visit at their house, whom we all knew (indeed it was her pride, she used

to ſay, to acknowledge her weakneſs on that ſide) to be a perfect pattern, or, according to her own phraſe, a perfect martyr of the moſt acute and delicate ſenſibility. At our houſe I ſaw her once in the greateſt diſtreſs imaginable, from the accidental drowning of a fly in the cream-pot; and got great credit with her myſelf, for my tenderneſs about a goldfinch belonging to one of our young ladies, which I had taught to perch upon my ſhoulder, and pick little crumbs out of my mouth. I ſhall never forget Mrs. *Senſitive*'s crying out, "Oh! how I envy "her the ſweet little creature's kiſſes!" It made me bluſh to hear her ſpeak ſo; for I had never thought of kiſſes in the matter.

That little circumſtance, however, procured me her favour ſo much, that, on being told of my ſituation, ſhe begged I might, as ſhe was kind enough to expreſs it, be placed under her protection. As I had heard ſo much of her tender-heartedneſs and her feeling; as ſhe was very rich, having been left a widow, with the diſpoſal of her huſband's whole fortune; as ſhe had nobody but herſelf in family, ſo that it promiſed to be an eaſy place; all theſe things made me very happy to accept of her offer; and I agreed to go home to her houſe immediately, her laſt attendant having left her ſomewhat ſuddenly. I heard indeed, the very morning after

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I went thither, that her ſervants did not uſe to ſtay long with her, which gave me ſome little uneaſineſs; but ſhe took occaſion to inform me, that it was entirely owing to their cruelty and want of feeling, having turned them all off for ſome neglect or ill uſage of her little family, as ſhe called it. This little family, of which I had not heard before, conſiſts of a number of birds and beaſts, which it is the great pleaſure of Mrs. Senſitive's life to keep and to fondle, and on which ſhe is conſtantly exerciſing her ſenſibilities, as ſhe ſays. My chief employment is to aſſiſt her in the care of them.

The waiting on this family of Mrs. Senſitive's is not ſo eaſy a taſk as I at firſt had flattered myſelf it would have been. We have three lap-dogs, four cats, ſome of the ladies of which are almoſt always lying in, a monkey, a flying ſquirrel, two parrots, a parroquet, a Virginia nightingale, a jack-daw, an owl, beſides half a hundred ſmaller birds, bulfinches, canaries, linnets, and white ſparrows. We have a dormouſe in a box, a ſet of guinea-pigs in the garret, and a tame otter in the cellar; beſides out-penſioners of pigeons and crows at our windows, and mice that come from a hole in the parlour wainſcotting, to viſit us at breakfaſt and dinner time. All theſe I am obliged to tend and watch with the utmoſt care and aſſiduity; not only to take

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care that their food and their drink be in plenty, and good order; not only to wash the lap-dogs, and to comb the cats, to play on the bird-organ for the instruction of the canaries and gold-finches, and to speak to the parrots and jack-daw for theirs; but I must accommodate myself, as my mistress says, to the feelings of the sweet creatures; I must contribute to their amusement, and keep them in good spirits; I must scratch the heads of the parrots; I must laugh to the monkey, and play at cork-balls with the kittens. Mrs. Sensitive says, she can understand their looks and their language from *sympathy*; and that she is sure it must delight every susceptible mind to have thus an opportunity for extending the sphere of its sensibilities.

She sometimes takes an opportunity of extending something else with poor me. You can hardly suppose what a passion she gets into, if any thing about this family of hers is neglected; and when she chuses to be angry, and speak her mind to me a little loud or so, her favourites, I suppose from sympathy too, join in the remonstrance, and make such a concert!—What between the lap-dogs, the parrots, the jack-daw, and the monkey, there is such a barking, squalling, cawing, and chattering!—Mrs. Sensitive's ears are not so easily hurt as her feelings.

But the misfortune is, Mr. Lounger, that her feelings are only made for brute creatures, and

don't extend to us poor Christians of the family. She has no pity on us, no sympathy in the world for our distresses. She keeps a chambermaid and a boy besides myself; and I assure you it does not fare near so well with us as it does with the lap-dogs and the monkey. Nay, I have heard an old milk-woman say, who has been long about the family, that Mr. Sensitive himself was not treated altogether so kindly as some of his Lady's four-footed favourites. He was, it seems, a good-natured man, and not much given to complain. The old woman says, she never heard of his finding fault with any thing, but once that Mrs. Sensitive insisted on taking into bed a Bologna greyhound, because she said it could not sleep a-nights, from the coldness of the climate in this country. Yet she often talks of her dear, dear Mr. Sensitive, and weeps when she talks of him; and she has got a fine tombstone raised over his grave, with an epitaph full of disconsolates, and inconsolables, and what not. To say truth, that is one way even for a human creature to get into her good graces; for I never heard her mention any of her dead friends without a great deal of kindness and tender regrets; but we are none of us willing to purchase her favour at that rate.

As for the living, they have the misfortune never to be to her liking. Ordinary objects of charity we are ordered never to suffer to come near

near her; ſhe ſays ſhe cannot bear to hear their lamentable ſtories, for that they tear her poor feelings in pieces. Beſides, ſhe has diſcovered, that moſt of them really deſerve no compaſſion, and many ſenſible worthy people of her acquaintance have cautioned her againſt giving way to her ſenſibility in that way; becauſe, in ſuch caſes, the compaſſion of individuals is hurtful to ſociety. There are ſeveral poor relations of her huſband's, who, if it had not been for a ſettlement he made in her favour a ſhort while before his death, would have had, I am told, by law, the greateſt part of his fortune, to whom ſhe never gave a ſhilling in her life. One little boy, her huſband's godſon, ſhe conſented to take into the houſe; but ſhe turned him out of doors in leſs than a week, becauſe of a blow he gave to *Fidele*, who was ſtealing his bread and butter.

Some of the other members of the family are almoſt tempted to ſteal bread and butter too. Mrs. Senſitive is an œconomiſt, though ſhe ſpends a great deal of money on theſe naſty dogs and monkeys, and contrives to pinch it off us, both back and belly, as the ſaying is. The chambermaid has given her warning already on this ſcore; and the boy ſays, he will only ſtay till he is a little bigger. As for me, ſhe is pleaſed to ſay, that I am of an order of beings ſuperior to the others; and ſhe ſometimes con-

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descends to reason with me. She would persuade me, Sir, that it is a sin to eat the flesh of any bird or beast, and talks much of a set of philosophers, who went naked, I think, who believed that people were turned into beasts and birds; and that therefore we might chance to eat our father or mother in the shape of a goose or a turkey. And she says, how delighted she would be in the society of those naked philosophers, and how much their doctrines agree with her fine feelings; and then she coaxes me, and says, that I have fine feelings too: but indeed I have no such feelings belonging to me; and I know her greens and water don't agree with my feelings at all, but quite to the contrary, that there is such a grumbling about me. ——And as for people being changed into birds and beasts, I think it is Heathenish, and downright against the Bible; and yet it is diverting enough sometimes to hear her fancies about it; and I can't help having my fancies too; as t'other morning, when the great horned owl sat at table by her, on the chair which she has often told me her dear, dear Mr. Sensitive used to occupy, and the poor creature looked so grave, and sat as silent as mum-chance;—but then she was so kind to the owl! I don't know what her squirrel was changed from, but it is always getting into some odd corner or other. 'Twas but yesterday

yesterday I got a ſad ſcold for offering to ſqueeze it when it had crept Lord knows how far up my petticoats; and my miſtreſs was in ſuch a flurry, for fear I ſhould have hurt it! She lets it ſkip all about her without ever ſtarting or wincing, for all her feelings are ſo fine. But theſe fine feelings are not like the feelings of any other body; and I wiſh to get into the ſervice of ſome perſon who has them of a coarſer kind, that would be a little more uſeful. If Mrs. Heartly therefore continues in her reſolution of quitting Lady Bidmore's on account of that old Lady's want of feeling, I would be very much obliged to you to recommend me to the place. I think I can bear a pretty good hand at a rubber and hard bruſh; and as for keeping the furniture clean, it will be perfect paſtime only, in compariſon of my mornings cleaning out Mrs. Senſitive's living collection. I hope Lady Bidmore, from her education, has never heard any thing of the naked philoſophers; and if any other ſet have taught her, that people are changed into Commodes, Cheſts of Drawers, or Bedſteads, it ſignifies very little, as we ſhall take exceeding good care of them, and the belief will have no effect on our dinners or ſuppers.——I am, &c.

BARBARA HEARTLESS.

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